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### O Tubas!

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for  
Craig Fuller

# O Tubas!

Randall Snyder  
2004

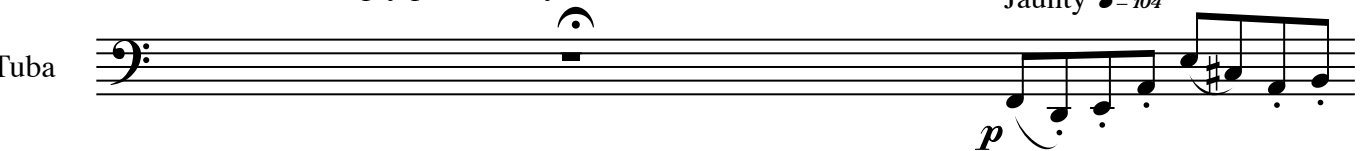
Narrator

When I was asked to write the history of the Tuba in a short and compendious form, I was appaled at the audacity of the suggestion! My task appeared like an attempt at the impossible. There was, however, one redeeming feature in the request: I was to be amply paid for my efforts!

The Tuba belongs to the

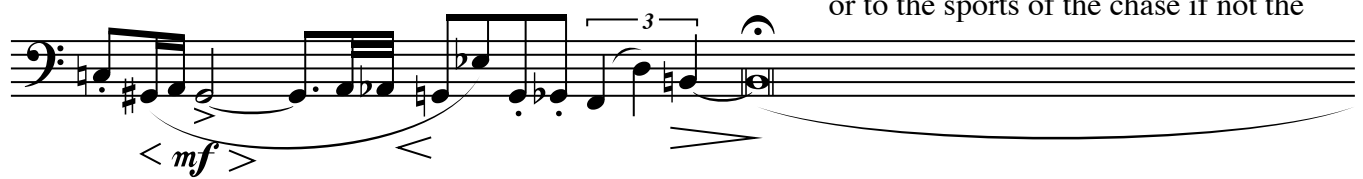
Tuba

Jaunty ♩ = 104



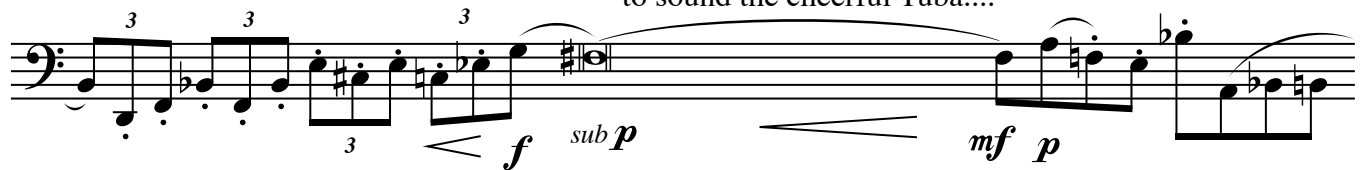
class of aerophones..or wind instruments

perhaps owing their inception to the  
riverside and the grain-sown fields...  
or to the sports of the chase if not the



battlefield

But just when man actually first learned  
to sound the cheerful Tuba....



is shrouded in the mists of antiquity

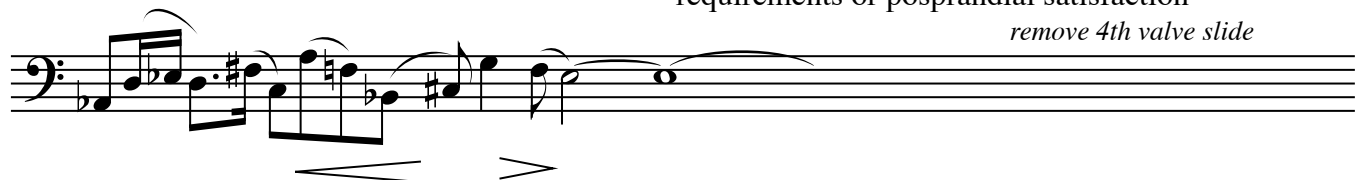
Yet we may infer, from



the manner of its sound-production

that is was discovered by our forefathers'preprandial  
requirements or posprandial satisfaction

remove 4th valve slide



(in other words...  
they got hungry)

One of the earliest forms  
of the Tuba...is the spiral shell

found as the *Cank* or conch shell in Asia  
and as the *Biou* in Europe

replace 4th valve slide



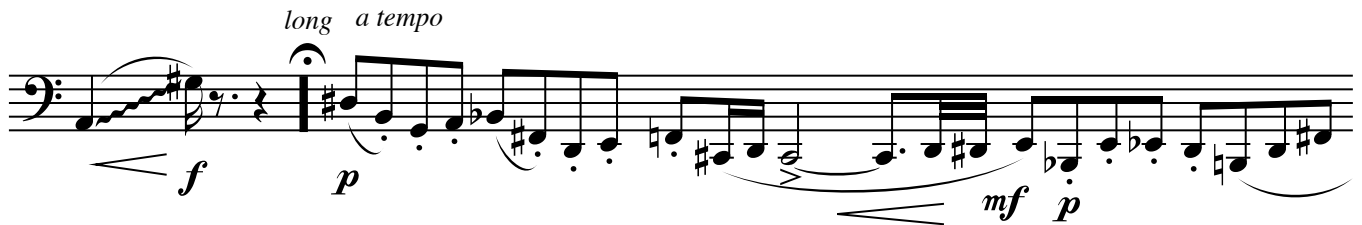
Now in order to get at the fish concealed  
within it was necessary to break off the  
tip of the shell to push it or blow it out....

*slow ....accel.....*

with the final blast that  
brealded the meal, the  
Tuba was discovered!



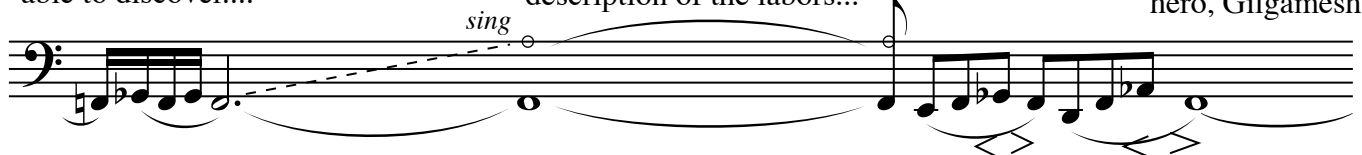
The earliest record however, of the making of a Tuba which we've been



able to discover....

is contained in an ancient  
description of the labors...

of the Sumerian  
hero, Gilgamesh



dated from the  
Fourth or Third  
Millenium B.C.E.

A Tempo 1

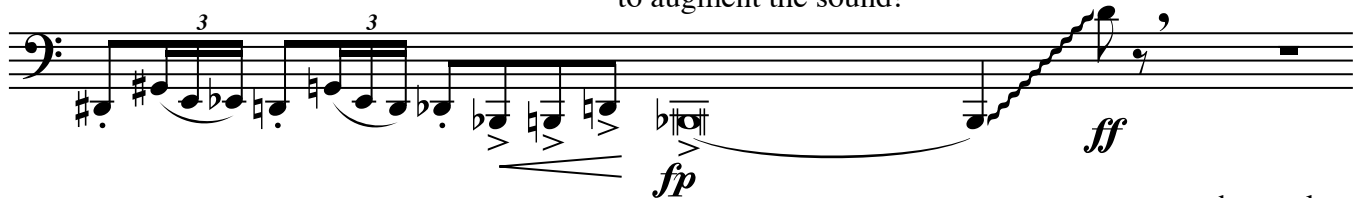
In this instance the instrument ...



was constructed of wood...

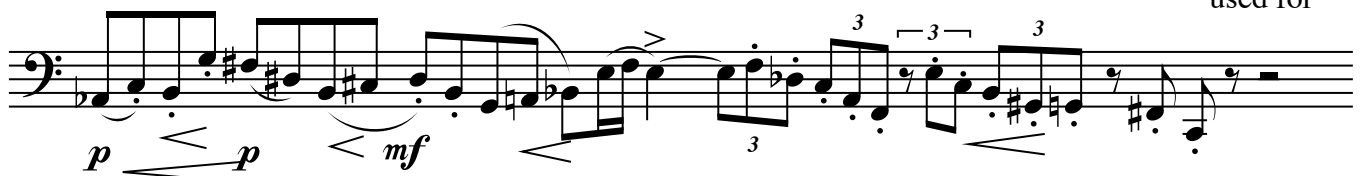
with the added refinement  
of an attachment at the end  
to augment the sound!

Other inland peoples  
also crafted the Tuba  
on large, hollow



river-reeds...thus, in the Gilgamesh story on the cuneiform tablet....

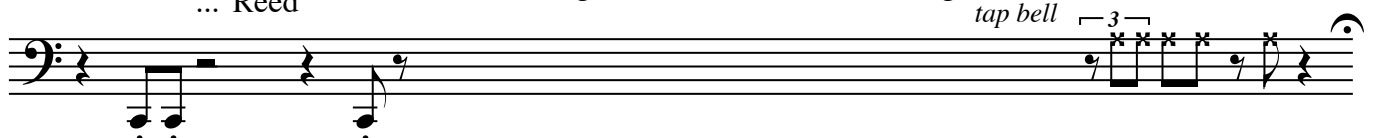
the mark  
used for



..."Tu-ba"

also means  
..."Reed"

To this elementary instrument would soon be added  
a resonator of gourd, wood, or horn, serving as... a bell  
tap bell



In Egypt... weird ensembles of Tubas used for state and military purposes appear in hieroglyphs about 1500 B.C.E. then passed

*mf* *p*

to the traders of the Eastern Mediterranean and it is in this connection, that the side-blown metal war tubas found in Ireland, can best be explained

*mf* *p*

March ♩ = 88 These fierce Tubas, know as *Karnyx*, frightened the most redoubtable warriors

*Pesante*

*f* *fp*

even the sturdy Roman Legions quailed before the din of the Celtic War Tubas

*f* *p*

eventually being forced to retaliate by creating three different forms of the Tuba: the large, circular *Bucina*, used for signaling... the crescent-shaped *Cornu*,

*p* *mf*

and the huge *Contrabadass*.....the direct progenitor of today's powerful Double Bb giants! These Roman tubas were extremely unwieldy, with the production of overtones, or upper notes, doubtful at best

*mouthpiece buzz*

*f* *fp*

For several centuries therefore, Herculean efforts were directed towards the construction of a Tuba capable of playing...the "perfect scale":

*heavy breathing*

*mp* *ppp*



By the Middel Ages, the most important bass instruments were referred to by the ominous title:

Serpents!

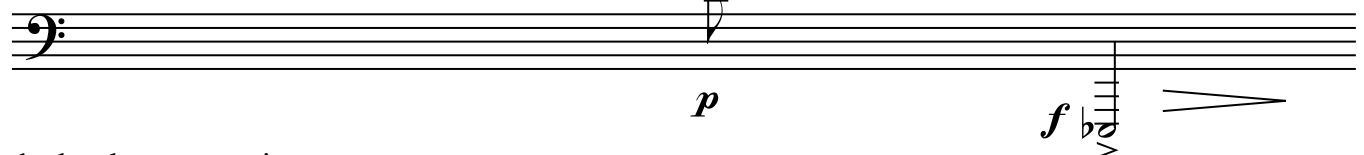
a reference to their circular shape



Serpents ranged widely in size....

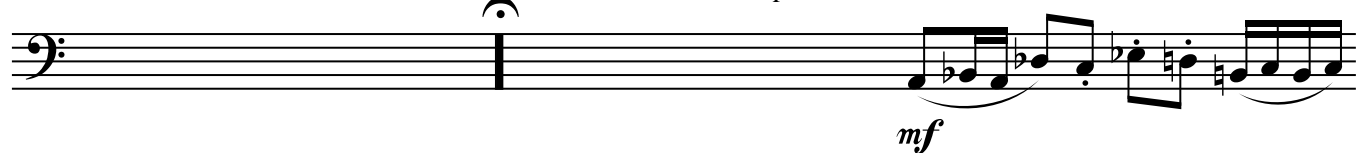
from the petite *Ophimonocleide* which could only play one note....

to a truly leviathon Double Contra Serpent....



the last known specimen now taking up an entire wing of the Municipal Museum at Grand Island

One of the most unpleasant offsprings of the Serpent... was the..... *Ophicleide*

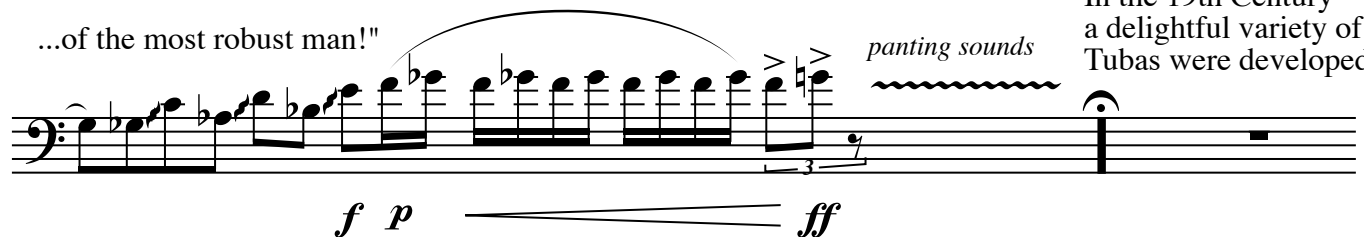


Berlioz informs us, that the monster..." required an amount of breath which would exhaust the lungs...



...of the most robust man!"

In the 19th Century a delightful variety of Tubas were developed:



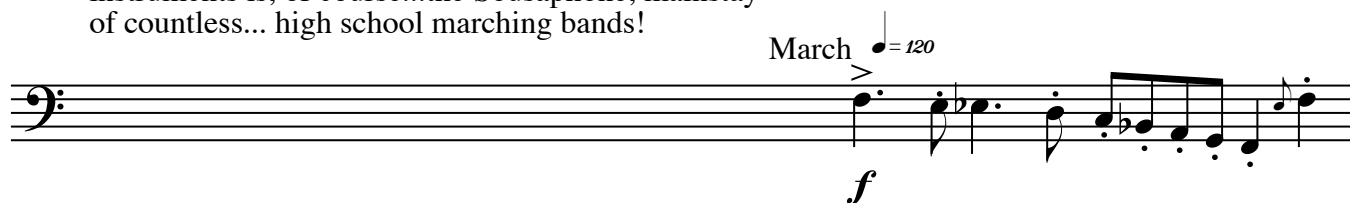
a baritone *Bugle a piston*....the spacious *Sonorophone*....the elliptical *Helicon*, the impressive, deep-throated



*Bambardon*, and how can one forget...the Wagnerian Tuba!



The most familiar descendant of these marvelous instruments is, of course...the Sousaphone, mainstay of countless... high school marching bands!



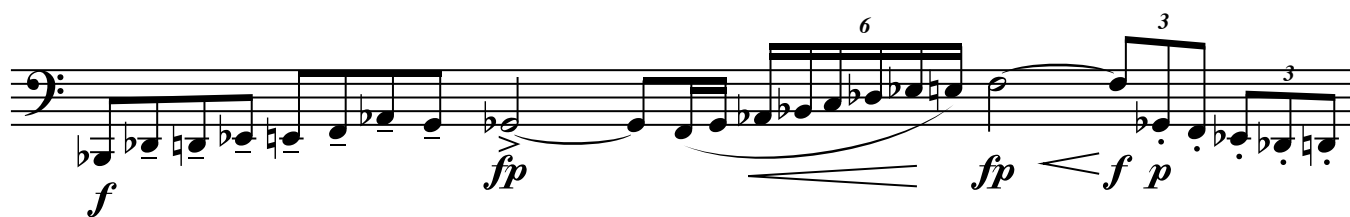
So dawns a new century and already many composers, such as Honneger, Ibert, Milhaud, and



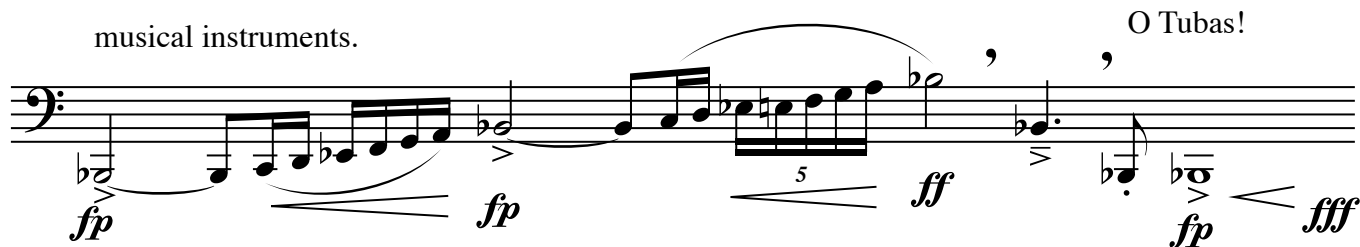
Spike Jones....have recognized the Tubas possibilities The unknown tonal effects and mysterious charms



which lie hidden within its cavernous depths may in the years to come place it as the foremost ...of our



musical instruments.



O Tubas!